

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE YAOUNDE 2601

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EINV, CM
SUBJECT: COASTAL CAMEROON'S DISPUTE WITH GRUC

REF: (A) STATE 127100 (B) STATE 126543

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED: ON MAY 19 W.F. HOOPER, VICE PRESIDENT, INTERNATIONAL DEPT. COASTAL STATES GAS CORP. CALLED ON EMBOFFS AND OUTLINED DISPUTE WITH GURC ALONG LINES DISCUSSED REF. B. HOOPER REQUESTED EMBASSY ARRANGE APPOINTMENTS FOR HIM TO MAKE PERSONAL DEMARCHE TO PRIME MINISTER BIYA. EMBOFFS ADVISED AGAINST THIS APPROACH AND INSTEAD ARRANGED APPOINTMENT WITH MME. ALIX BETTAYENE, EXTREMELY WELL CONNECTED LAWYER, TO SEEK HER ADVICE ON HOW BEST TO PROCEED. BETTAYENE CONFIRMED EMBASSY APPRAISAL THAT BEST PERSON FOR HOOPER TO MEET WITH WOULD BE SAMUEL LIBOCK, CONSEILLER TECHIQUE AT THE PRESIDENCY AND PDG OF SONARA, WHICH WILL CONSTRUCT AND OPERATE PLANNED OIL REFINERY. DCM SPOKE INFORMALLY TO BOTH LIBOCK AND MINISTER OF MINES AND POWER ELANGWE AND ARRANGED APPOINTMENT WITH FORMER. ON OWN INITIATIVE HOOPER SAW MINISTER ELANGWE AND HIS TECHNICAL COUNSELOR BERNARD FOUDA. FINALLY, AS RESULT OF LIBOCK APPOINTMENT, HOOPER MET WITH DIRECTOR OF MINES AND GEOLOGY BERNARD MOUDIO.

2. HOOPER STATED THAT LIBOCK WAS VERY HELPFUL AND THAT HE
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HAD PROMISED TO PERSONALLY ASSIST COASTAL STATE IN GAINING PARTICIPATION IN FUTURE CONCESSIONS, ALTHOUGH HE OFFERED NO HOPE THAT GURC REJECTION OF COASTAL'S 10 PERCENT FARM-IN BID IN OCEANIC'S TWO CONCESSIONS COULD BE REVERSED BEDORE JUNE 1 EXPIRATION OF OPTION TO BUY. ACCORDING TO HOOPER, LIBOCK WAS VERY IMPRESSED WITH COASTAL STATES' WILLINGNEXX TO SPEND HARD CASH ON EXPLORATION. HOOPER SAID THAT MEETINGS WITH

ELANGWE AND FOU DA WERE LESS HELPFUL BECAUSE BOTH OFFICIALS WERE NONCOMMITTAL AND NOT FORTHCOMING WITH REGARD TO COASTAL STATES PROBLEM. APPOINTMENT WITH MOUDIO TOOK PLACE AFTER HOOPER'S FINAL MEETING WITH EMBOFF, AND WE THEREFORE NOT AWARE OF RESULTS. WE BELIEVE THIS MEETING MAY ALSO HAVE PROVED FRUITFUL BECAUSE HOOPER SAID LIBOCK HAD AGREED TO CALL MOUDIO ON COASTAL STATES BEHALF.

3. HOOPER APPEARED TO BE VERY SATISFIED THAT MEETING WITH LIBOCK IN PARTICULAR HAD ALLOWED HIM TO PRESENT COASTAL STATES' CASE TO PROPER PERSON IN GURC. HE BELIEVES GURC IS WILLING TO GIVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO FUTURE COASTAL STATES BIDS FOR SHARES IN CONCESSIONS BUT ADMITS THAT MUCH DEPENDS ON HIS COMPANY VIGOROUSLY FOLLOWING-UP ON MEETING WITH LIBOCK. END UNCLASSIFIED

4. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE - COMMENT: WE ARE AWARE OF AT LEAST TWO FACTORS WHICH MAY HAVE CAUSED GURC REJECTION OF COASTAL STATES FARM-IN BID. MOST OBVIOUS AND PROBABLE POINT IS THAT GURC MAY NOT HAVE BEEN AWARE OF COASTAL STATES' SIZE AND REPUTATION, AND THEREFORE SIMPLY DISCARDED IT AS ANOTHER SMALL PROMOTER LIKE OCEANIC AND TREND, UNINTERESTED IN SERIOUS EXPLORATION. A SECOND AND MORE SUBTLE POINT IS THAT ELF-SEREPCA, WHICH WILL PROBABLY TAKE COASTAL STATES SHARES IN THESE TWO PROMISING BLOCS, IS MIXED COMPANY IN WHICH THE GURC HOLDS 25.73 PERCENT. IT IS REPORTED THAT THE GURC SHARES IN THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COMPANY WILL RISE AS PRODUCTION BY ELF-SEREPCA INCREASES. THEREFORE, IF THE GURC WISHES TO INCREASE ITS CONTROL OF OIL RESOURCES, IT IS IN ITS INTERESTS TO MAXIMIZE ELF-SEREPCA'S SHARES IN PROMISING BLOCS. END LIMITED OFFICIAL USE. SMYTHE

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